

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-7 and 9-12 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claim 8 as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Although not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, claims 1 and 6 have been amended to include the limitations of claim 8. Accordingly, claims 1-7 and 9-12 are in condition for allowance.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Kinose (JP 10-022358). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants have added the limitations of claim 8 to claim 1. The Examiner previously indicated that the limitations of claim 8 would make claim 6 allowable since these limitations are not seen in the references. Applicants submit that the same limitations would also make claim 1 allowable since it is also not seen in the

references. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is now allowable over the Kinose reference.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 4-7 and 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Kinose in view of the admitted prior art. Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Kinose in view of the admitted prior art and further in view of Kizaki et al. (U.S. Patent 5,763,892). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner indicated that claim 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By way of the proposed amendment, claim 6 has been amended to include this allowable claim language. Accordingly, claim 6 and the claims which depend therefrom are now considered to be allowable. Likewise, claims 2-5 which depend from claim 1 are also considered to be allowability based on the allowability of claim 1 as discussed above.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner either alone or in combination. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse (Reg. No. 27,295) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,


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